

rule or that rule. But in the long run, the important part of tax reform is to make it simpler.

I would love to see a day, and I envision one, where every American can fill out their taxes, whatever it may be, be it income tax or sales tax or whatever, on a single sheet of paper. That is something that I would like to see. But as important as all of that is, I also believe that we have to rebuild our defenses. I believe that they have been built down way too far.

The next big challenge for this Congress, despite its differences, and it will have them, will be how do we rebuild those defenses the right way, to rebuild morale that is at its lowest point in years and years.

I urge my colleagues to do so, and I wish them well in making those decisions for our Nation's future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, November 13, I was unavoidably detained in my district and missed rollcall vote numbers 595 and 596.

I would like the RECORD to reflect that, had I been present, I would have voted no on both rollcall vote 595 and 596.

WHO WILL BECOME THE NEXT PRESIDENT?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I know that some of my colleagues have had to rush back to their office. One or two of them will hopefully join me here if they are of like mind and join in this discussion of what is the issue that is gripping America today; and that is the issue of who will become the next President, but more important, whether we can continue to have confidence in the democratic institutions of this country.

Now, let me deal with some of the basics first. The election last Tuesday produced a very clear winner of the popular vote. These were the results that were reported. My colleagues can read the numbers here. But GORE received almost a quarter of a million votes more than Mr. Bush. Now, I say a quarter million, because I know that the vast majority of ballots that have yet to be counted even today are absentee ballots from the State of California.

Mr. Speaker, I am from California. It is my business to know how absentee ballots and particularly late absentee ballots are likely to come in. I am confident that when those California votes are tabulated, not only will Mr. GORE have a lead of over 200,000, but a lead of 250,000.

But that is the popular vote, and we are a Nation dedicated to the rule of

law. Our law calls for the electoral college to operate. But for that college to operate, there has to be a fair count and a fair vote in each State. That is why we must turn our eyes to the State of Florida where we will see a genuine contest.

One side in that contest is trying to seize power through political power, chiefly through the power of the governorship of Florida and the Secretary of State of the State of Florida, two elected officials, and is trying to malign the rule of law or rather just malign the court system, which is pretty much the same thing.

See, one can be a football coach who says I believe that football should be played by the rules, but first we have got to kick all the referees off the field. We all have been angry at a call by a referee. I have been in stadiums where people yell "kill the ref." I have never quite joined in such a statement. But imagine what football would be like if there were no referees or if there was an attempt to go to someone paid by one of the teams and have them arbitrate the disputes.

Now, our courts are not perfect. But they are far less political, let me tell my colleagues, than those of us who are elected officials.

So I would hope that the courts of Florida would ultimately and quickly resolve the issues that are before us. Now, the main issue before us is how the votes in the counties of Florida are going to be counted. But before we get there, I would like to focus a little bit on the ballot in Palm Beach County, the famous butterfly ballot.

Here is a picture of it. We have all seen it. It is confusing; 19,000 people double punched on this ballot. Some of them had voted for Buchanan by mistake and thought they could correct it by punching a hole for GORE. Some of them saw two holes to the right of the Democratic candidate and thought that, if they wanted to vote for GORE and LIEBERMAN, they needed to punch both holes to the right. Some were simply confused by an array of arrows pointing in different directions, left and right to a row of holes.

Now, it is said that the voters could have known about this ballot by looking at their sample ballot. Well, without the holes, this ballot tells one nothing. A sample ballot comes in, the names all seem to be there, the people glance at it, and decide who to vote for and then show up on election day. To say that looking at the ballot without the holes is the same as looking at it with the holes is simply absurd.

But it is not enough that the ballot is confusing. In fact, I believe that there is a Florida court decision that says that, if a ballot is merely confusing, the courts will not provide redress to those who were confused.

We are a Nation of the rule of law. But the Florida courts were very clear when the Supreme Court of the State of Florida ruled 2 years ago, in Beckstrom versus Volusia County Can-

vassing Board, that is Volusia County Canvassing Board, that where there is not only confusion, as there clearly was in this case, but also noncompliance with statutory procedures.

Then the court must provide redress, must adjust the election or allow for a new election if there is reasonable doubt as to whether the certified election expressed the will of voters and when that doubt extends to who won the election.

Well, there are more people in the cloakroom some of the times than the number of ballots that separates Mr. Bush from Mr. GORE in the vote in Florida. There is no doubt that any confusion in Palm Beach County could well have affected the result of the Presidency of the United States. There is no doubt that the ballot was confusing.

Many on the day of the election before they realized how important it would turn out to be started complaining about that confusion. There is no doubt that this ballot was in violation of Florida law, not just that it was confusing, not just a vague law of Florida that the ballot should be clear and unconfusing, but two very specific statutes.

The first Florida statute that is violated by this ballot is the one that requires that the names be on the left and the holes be on the right for every candidate for public office. Here, as we see, some of the names are on the left and the holes are on the right and sometimes the name is on the right and the hole is on the left.

Now when one looks at that Florida statute, just reading through a statute book, its wisdom is not all that apparent. The reason for complying with the law may not be all that clear. But it is by violating that law that the officials in Palm Beach County created the ballot that now has the whole world watching Florida.

The second statute in Florida also requires that the first ranking on the ballot, the first listing and the first hole goes to the party that won the last gubernatorial election in Florida. That is the Republican Party. My colleagues will notice the Republican Party on this butterfly ballot has the first listing and the first hole.

The second listing and the second hole is supposed to go to the party that came in second in the last gubernatorial election. That is the Democratic Party. As my colleagues can see, well, the Democratic Party does not have the second hole; the Democratic Party has the third hole. Whether one views it as the second listing or the third listing depends upon whether one has a tendency to go from left then right or left column and then right column. But one thing is very clear, this ballot does not award the second hole to the Democratic Party.

Every voter in Florida had the right to a ballot with the names on the left and the holes on the right. Every voter in Florida had a right if they wanted to